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THE RAPID GROWTH OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THEIR ACCESSIBILITY IN RURAL AREAS.

BY- ELDRIDGE, DONALD A.

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THE COURSE OFFERINGS IN SOME JUNIOR COLLEGES FAIL TO MEET ADEQUATELY THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF RURAL YOUTH. A STUDY IN 1964 REVEALED THAT ONLY TWENTY OF THE SEVENTY JUNIOR COLLEGES IN CALIFORNIA OFFERED TRAINING IN AGRICULTURE, ALTHOUGH THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED "DIRECTORY OF JUNIOR COLLEGES" SHOWS AN INCREASE TO SIXTY. FURTHER STATISTICS REVEAL THAT 253 OF THE 750 JUNIOR COLLEGES THROUGHOUT THE U. S. ARE OFFERING VARIOUS AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS, INCLUDING TRAINING FARM MACHINERY TECHNICIANS, FARM AND RANCH MANAGEMENT, AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, MARKETING TECHNOLOGY, FISHERY AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT, CITRUS FRUIT PRODUCTION, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, DAIRY TECHNOLOGY, AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN. ACCORDING TO SNEPP, WRITING IN "THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE", JUNIOR COLLEGES CAN PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR A RAPIDLY CHANGING AGRICULTURE BY--(1) FORMULATING AND COORDINATING ON A STATEWIDE BASIS, (2) PROVIDING A SEPARATE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT WITH A HEAD OR CHAIRMAN, AND (3) HAVING AT LEAST SIX FULL-TIME INSTRUCTORS AND A MINIMUM ENROLLMENT OF 120 STUDENTS IN EACH AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT. THIS SPEECH WAS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE ON RURAL YOUTH, OCTOBER 23-26, 1967, WASHINGTON, D. C., SPONSORED JOINTLY BY THE U. S. DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, INTERIOR, AND LABOR, OEO, AND THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON YOUTH OPPORTUNITY. (ES)

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THE RAPID GROWTH OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THEIR ACCESSIBILITY IN RURAL AREAS

Dr. Donald A. Eldridge
President, American Association of Junior Colleges, and
President, Bennett College
Milbrook, N. Y.

How many of the more than 750 junior colleges now operating in the United States offer programs and services especially designed for rural youth; and how many of the 500 new ones expected during the next decade will incorporate plans developed with the needs of our non-urban - suburban population in mind?

It seems clear that most of our junior colleges as well as our headquarters staff of the American Association of Junior Colleges have not given as much time to consideration of the needs of rural youth as has been devoted to other important demands being made by many other people in numerous other areas. And until the planners of this conference asked about this, we had not been seriously prodded to give special consideration to this question. For example, a study by Ralph M. Vorhies in 1964 revealed that "although California is the leading agricultural state and has over 70 junior colleges, less than 20 offer any training in agriculture." Yet surveys of former students revealed that both they and their employers felt their two years of junior college education had been valuable.

The need has been and will continue to be accentuated by changing circumstances of population and technology and by the increasing demands upon the men and women who live and work in rural areas, in many cases paralleling the new forces which are affecting their city counsins, there being little quiet rural isolation in this jet-stream age, at least ideologically.

According to the recently published Directory of Junior Colleges, there are now some 253 junior colleges in 34 states which offer agricultural programs of some kind, the largest number, 60, being in California, a notable increase since the 1964 study cited above. Texas boasts 28, Mississippi 15, and Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Pennsylvania, and Washington, 11 each. Many of these programs are in effect pretraining connected with state universities and four-year colleges, but many others are terminal. They range from the training of farm machinery technicians in Kansas to farm and ranch management in Colorado, to agricultural business management in Illinois, to feed and fertilizer marketing technology in Iowa, to fishery and wildlife management in Minnesota, to citrus fruit production in Arizona, animal husbandry and landscape design and nursery practice in California, dairy tech-

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nology and poultry husbandry in New York, along with research on potato diseases, recreation supervision, resort management, and many, many more.

Of one successful program it is said that "The student who completes this program will be able to offer the prospective employer specific knowledge and training in agricultural technology, general business principles, and salesmanship and human relations skills. In addition, he will have four months of on-the-job experience to his credit.

"The program is based on a survey of needs of western Minnesota employers in the feed, seed, grain, and fertilizer fields. The demand for trained people in these areas appears excellent, and the graduate should enjoy excellent prospects for advancement into supervisory or managerial positions, or eventual operation of his own business."

Neil O. Snepp in The Agricultural Education Magazine for March, 1966, listed several guidelines, including the following:

"1. The junior or community college can provide the type of educational programs needed by a rapidly-changing agriculture.

"2. These programs should be formulated and coordinated on a state-wide basis. The curricula should be developed on the basis of the needs of agricultural industry and business, the community, and the students. Advisory committees consisting of leaders in agricultural business should be used to assist in program development, especially in the area of terminal-technical programs. Transfer programs should be developed in cooperation with the senior agricultural colleges of the state.

"3. Agriculture programs in community colleges should be organized as separate departments with a department head or chairman. The department head would have the major responsibility for program development and should consult and cooperate with other agricultural education agencies in the state....

"4. The agricultural staff should consist of at least six full time instructors for a comprehensive program. Staff members should have a masters degree or higher and had previous teaching experience.

"5. The minimum number of full time equivalent agriculture students enrolled should be 120."

Beyond the formal curricular offerings and related counseling and placement services offered by these and other junior colleges, some make important efforts to provide other services of importance to residents of the areas in which they are located. Arizona Western College, for example, organizes and hosts a FFA/4-H Field Day and the Yuma County 4-H Round-up each year; it pro-

vides two faculty members as 4-H Club project leaders; runs workshops for 4-H Club leaders; and is taking steps to revitalize a college group known as "Arizona Western Farmers" to serve as a rural youth extra-curricular activity "where poise, leadership potential, organizing ability, etc., can be developed," in the words of William J. Berg, Vice President for Instruction and Community Services.

Lake Region Junior College in North Dakota is attempting to develop a base for leadership in Indian education by working with "a small Indian reservation which is listed as one of the worst poverty pockets in the country." Another, in California, is offering educational assistance to migrant workers.

Educational service to the entire community, with a wide variety of functions and programs, which is the role of the junior college defined in Higher Education for American Democracy (the 1947 report of the President's Commission on Higher Education) is well demonstrated by many community colleges in rural areas, one good example being Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia, whose acting president writes: "...this college was originally developed to serve rural youth exclusively but through the years has developed into a community-type junior college. We still provide many services to our rural youth through FFA, FHA, 4-H members by offering our facilities and personnel for assistance with rallies, contests, and related activities, as well as some formal short courses. ABAC personnel speak in rural areas when requested, serve as judges and as consultants. Also, located in offices on our campus are the district Departments of Vocational Agriculture, Home Economics, the regional Film and Book libraries which reach out in many ways to all rural youth in this locality. We believe our greatest contribution to rural youth lies with the Baldwin alumni who constitute the faculties, families and civic organizations and communities in the rural areas."

This statement well reflects the scope and dedication of the community college at its best, serving the people of its region with a combination of contemporary pragmatism and fundamental idealism. It is in this spirit that rural youth of our nation can and should be served by our community colleges everywhere.